PEACE
AND
LOVE,
Recommended and Perſwaded:
IN TWO
SERMONS,
PREACHED
At *BRISTOL*, *January* the 31. 167⅘

By *Tho. Jekyll*, A. M. and Vicar of *Rowd* in the County of *Wilts.* of Trin: Coll. Oxf.d

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To the READER.

Reader,

IN *Obedience to the Commands of a Perſon, to whom I am beholden for a very Liberal Education, and a great deal more too, it has been my Uſual Cuſtom ever ſince* I *liv'd in theſe Parts, to Preach twice every Year at* Briſtol; *and being there lately, as at other times before upon the like Occaſion,* I *was in a very rude manner Clamour'd againſt, and both my Sermons Arraign'd and Condemn'd before either of us came to a Tryal: Nay, before* I *was out of the Church, it was earneſtly preſs'd by one that* Pretends *to underſtand the Law, that* I *ſhould be Secur'd; and ſo far did his Opinion,* for the ſake of his Gown, *prevail, that* I *was ſent for before the Mayor, and accus'd of ſuch Crimes as (had they been true) would have taken away my Life in the moſt* Ignominous *manner, and affix'd a perpetual Odium upon my Name and Memory; but thanks be to God, they are as much abhorred by me, as they were falſly charg'd againſt me; and therefore to Vindicate my* Reputation (*which ought to be*

as dear as Life it ſelf to a Clergy-man) I *have ventur'd to put my ſelf upon the Tryal of my Country, by whom, though I may juſtly expect to be caſt for weakneſs and inſufficiency, yet I have Reaſon to hope that I ſhall be acquit from thoſe Infamous Aſperſions that were caſt upon me by mine Accuſers: And then* (*Kind* Reader) *for the former, I heartily beg thine and the Worlds Pardon, and have only this to ſay for my ſelf, that nothing but the latter ſhould have forc'd any thing of mine into the Preſs; upon which account I think I am rather to be Pittied then Condemn'd, there being but few Perſons that would care to have their Private Studies and Diſcourſes intended only for the Pulpit, expos'd unto the publick view, eſpecially too, upon ſuch an Occaſion as this, when the Printing muſt not in the leaſt differ from the Preaching of them, as I do aſſure thee theſe Sermons of mine do not. Farewel, and live Peaceably,*

T. Jekyll.

Rowd, Feb. 18th.
167[illegible]
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Peace

PEACE and LOVE;

Recommended and Perſwaded.

Heb. 12. 14.

Follow Peace with all Men, and Holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

OF all the Doctrines that were ever deliver'd unto the World, thoſe that are comprehended within the compaſs of our Saviours Sermons and Diſcourſes, do without all Controverſie, deſerve the higheſt place in our eſteem, and to be the firſt of all reduc'd into our Practice, being of ſuch a Nature as afford the Obſervers of them not only the greateſt ſatisfaction and delight from themſelves, but do alſo render them *accepted of God, and approved of Men*; in that they tend not only to the making of us Good Men, and Good Chriſtians, but alſo good Neighbours, good Magiſtrates, and good Subjects too; and therefore, whoever they are, that under the gay Pretences of Advancing the Glory of God, and the good of his Church, have learnt to be Ill-Natur'd and Troubleſome, let them know that they *have not ſo learned Chriſt*, who not only ſent, but came himſelf down from Heaven, that both by Precept and Example he might Teach us better Principles and Practices: And therefore who-

ever looks into the Goſpel, that *Perfect Law of Liberty*, ſhall ſoon find that it was never intended to ſet men together by the Ears, to give them a Licence to fall foul upon, and to ruin one another; and that many times for Trifles and Circumſtances, not fit to be mention'd the ſame year with our Chriſtian Peace. It's true our Saviour tells us, *Math.* 10. 34. That *He came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword.* But what Sword was it? Not the Sword of War or Perſecution amongſt Chriſtians one againſt another; not the Sword of Friends, but of Enemies, *viz.* Thoſe that were Enemies to Chriſtianity it ſelf; and ſuch too, as no tyes of Nature or Humanity could Reconcile: And therefore ſince theſe things are ſaid to happen, not as the Deſign, but only as the Conſequence of the Goſpel; and that *Non ex ſuâ naturâ ſed aliorum vitio*, Not of its own Malicious Nature, but rather from the deprav'd Diſpoſitions of men: What may we hence conclude, but that we are ſtrangely Degenerated from the true Goſpel Temper, whilſt we increaſe and foment thoſe Differences and Animoſities that are amongſt us about matters of no weight or moment at all? As if our Saviours Prophecying of theſe things were a ſufficient Warrant for us to bring them to paſs! No certainly, that which falls out *per Accidens & præter Intentionem Chriſti*, can never become *Decus & Officium Chriſtiani*; Thoſe evils that he only Propheſied of, but never intended, can never become our Duty or Priviledg to bring about. His Deſign and Endeavour was to Reconcile God and Man, Jew and Gentile and and to bring all the world too (if it were poſſible) into one Community: He was therefore Uſher'd into the World with a Proclamation of Peace; and when he left it, he Bequeath'd a Legacy of Peace; nay all along through the whole courſe of his Life, in all the Circumſtances of it, from his Cradle to his Grave, we ſhall find him ſo far from ſowing any Seeds of Contention, that he would rather loſe his Right, yea, and his Life too, then give the leaſt Occaſion of Offence to any. Its true, there was one ſort of War and Contention that he Intended, and that was a War againſt our ſelves, and not our Neighbours; againſt our Luſts, and not our Brethren; againſt our Sins and Corruptions, and not for our Fancies and Opinions: And in this warfare, he himſelf becomes our Captain; and whoever would be accounted a good Souldier of his, *muſt deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs*; that is, he muſt *Mortifie all his Earthly members, be Crucified to the World, and get the World Crucified to him*; and then, and not till then, ſhall he be able to follow him: And therefore, as the beſt ſecurity of our Chriſtian Peace, we are requir'd to Engage in this Holy War againſt our Luſts.

Luſts. *Whence* ſays St. *James* in the 4th. *chap.* of his *Ep.* & *v.* 1. *Come Wars and Fightings amongſt you? Come they not hence, even of your Luſts which War in your Members?* Yes certainly, theſe blow the coals of all that fire of Contention which has hitherto flam'd ſo high amongſt us: So that were it not for the Covetouſneſs of ſome, the Pride and Ambition of others, the Ignorance and Self-conceitedneſs of too too many more, all our Differences might eaſily be Reconcil'd: If the Pride and Conceitedneſs of mens minds were but chang'd into Meekneſs and Humility, and all their Heats and Paſſions cool'd by Patience and Moderation; and if that neceſſary Duty of Love and Charity (the Badg and Glory of a Chriſtian) were but more ſeen amongſt us, we ſhould never have ſo many Sects and Parties, or at leaſtwiſe, not ſo much Hatred and Emulation, ſince that would teach us to bear with one anothers Infirmities; and if we cannot all agree in Judgment, to agree at leaſt in Holineſs of Life, which is the beſt Evidence of the Honeſty of any mans Conſcience in matters of Religion. And therefore the Apoſtle St. *Paul* (for I take him to be the Author of this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*) knowing how deſtructive all ſin and wickedneſs was to the Peace of the Church, and by conſequence to the very Being of the Church it ſelf, he do's in ſeveral places of this, and the reſt of his Epiſtles preſs Chriſtians to an eager Purſuit after Holineſs, as the chiefeſt Security of the Churches Peace, 1 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. *Refuſe profane and old Wives Fables, and Exerciſe thy ſelf rather unto Godlineſs; for bodily Exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having a promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*; And ſo 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. *Flee youthful Luſts, but follow Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity, Peace*; they being the greateſt hinderances of theſe; and ſo here in the Text, he adds both together in the ſame Exhortation, *Follow Peace with all men, and Holineſs, without which, no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* In which words we have an Exhortation, and a Motive to back that Exhortation.

1. Here is an Exhortation to the purſuit of Peace, and to the practice of Holineſs, two things that are of exceeding great worth and vallue, honour'd and eſteem'd of all, though ſeen in, and practic'd but by few. What he here means by Peace, may be ſeen from the like expreſſion elſe-where, *Rom.* 14. 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.* That is (as the Context fully proves) *Let us not put a ſtumbling block, or an occaſion to fall in our Brothers way*, by wrangling over-eagerly for thoſe things that may as well be let alone as us'd; but rather let us

walk more according to Charity, and *not for meats and drinks*, or other trifles to *destroy him for whom Christ dyed*; for says he, *v.* 17. *The Kingdom of God, is not Meat & Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, these being *the things whereby we may best edifie and profit one another*. Therefore says he also, *Rom.* 12. 18. *If it be possible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all men*, i. e. not only avoid giving of offence, but taking of it too; therefore says he, *v.* 17. *Recompence no man Evil for Evil*: Though thy Christian Peace be struck at, yet let it not be broken; rather bear with an Injury then Revenge it, it's the second blow that begets the Quarrel; therefore *be not*, by any means *overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*, v. 21. And to this our Apostle adds Holiness, because of its neer Relation to, and necessary dependance upon the former, it being impossible to enjoy perfect Peace without it: *There is no peace, saith my God, unto the Wicked*, Isa. 48. 22.

2. Here is also a Motive to back that Exhortation: *Without which no man shall see the Lord*. Without which, that is, without either, nay without both; for though the Greek Particle seems to relate unto the latter only, *viz.* Holiness, yet they being both of absolute nectssity, in order to the obtaining of Everlasting Salvation, though it be a strain upon Grammer, yet it may, I think, without any prejudice to sound Doctrine be apply'd also to the former, *viz.* Peace, especially since our Saviour has pronounc'd the same Blessedness unto both, *Math.* 5. 8, 9. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children of God.* Where, though the Phrases vary, yet the sense is the same, the sight or enjoyment of God being only the Inheritance & Priviledg of his Children.

No Man shall see the Lord; that is, shall dwell in the sight and presence of God, shall ever enjoy his favour and love; and that either upon Earth in those duties of his Worship and Service, in which he is pleas'd to manifest much of his Divine Excellencies to holy and good men; or shall not enjoy his everlasting presence in Heaven, *In whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose Right-hand there are pleasures for ever-more*: Such as are not only above others in their ravishing delights, but also infinitely beyond others in their Everlasting duration and continuance, being such as none can take away or interrupt. So that from hence, we may with the Apostle observe, That without true Love and Charity in our hearts towards one another, and without true Piety in our Lives towards God, its impossible for us

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ever to be truly happy. And ſince the Apoſtle has ſaid it, it will not misbecome us to examine how far forth his aſſertion may be made good; now it will appear to be ſo, if we conſider, 1. The nature of God himſelf, who is infinitely merciful and Holy, and delights in none but thoſe that are ſo. 2. The nature of true happineſs it ſelf, which conſiſts chiefly in theſe two things, *viz.* Peace and Holineſs. 3. The nature of theſe excellent Duties themſelves which are here preſſed upon us in the Text, which are not only the Pre-requiſite qualifications in order to the obtaining of true happineſs, but are alſo a chief part of that happineſs it ſelf.

The Propoſition will appear to be true from the nature of God himſelf; And here if we do but conſider the ſeveral circumſtances of the humane nature, we ſhall ſoon find that the enjoyment of God is the only thing that can make it truly happy, and therefore whilſt others are ſeeking for Good elſewhere, the good man's deſire is always towards him. Pſal. 4. 6. *There be many that ſay, who will ſhew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us*; Now ther's nothing can procure this happineſs for any, but only the purſuit and practice of thoſe things that pleaſe him; nor can any thing render us acceptable in his ſight, but only thoſe things that are agreeable to his Nature and Commands (for you know the only way of pleaſing another is, by doing thoſe things that are anſwerable to his Mind and Will.) Now there is nothing that God has more earneſtly commanded, nor is there any thing that we can more nearly reſemble him in, than Peace and Holineſs. He has ſufficiently Demonſtrated his love too, and deſire of Peace, in ſending of his Son into the World, to be the Bleſſed Peace-maker betwixt himſelf and us. And the Prophet *Hab.* gives us this account of his Holineſs, *that he is of purer eyes then to behold the leaſt ſin*: When *Moſes* deſir'd to ſee the Glory of God, to gratifie his requeſt, God Almighty promiſed him to *make his goodneſs paſs before him*, which accordingly he made good by a Proclamation both of his Name and Nature; in which he is Repreſented as one ſo far from all Malice and deſire of Strife and Contention, that he paſſes by infinitely more occaſions, than ever he takes againſt any, and withall ſo Holy, that he will not approve of any wickedneſs in any body elſe; and therefore *Moſes* juſtly ſtyles him *Glorious in Holineſs*, and upon all occaſions makes uſe of the goodneſs of the nature of God, as an Argument to excite the Children of *Iſrael* to the like practices, when he would perſwade them to Mercy and Gentleneſs unto others, he minds them of their Redemption out

Hab. 1. 13.

Exo. 33. 19.

Exo. 15. 11.

of *Egypt*, Deut. 26. at large, but more particularly, v. 18. *Thou shalt remember that thou wast a Bondman in the Land of* Egypt, *and the Lord thy God Redeemed thee thence, therefore I command thee to do this thing:* And when he would perſwade them to be Holy, he drawes an Argument too from the nature of God in this particular, *Be ye Holy*
Levit. 19.2. *for I am Holy.* And thus our Saviour too propounds the nature of God for our pattern and encouragement; he would have us love our Enemies and ſhew kindneſs to them, becauſe God doth ſo; and to be good our ſelves, becauſe he is ſo. Math. 5. 44, 45, 48. *But I ſay unto you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſs you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpightfully uſe you, and perſecute you:* And why ſo? *That you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth Rain on the juſt and the unjuſt*; to which therefore he adds, v 48. *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* So that conſidering the eſſential goodneſs of the nature of God, we may ſoon ſee how acceptable a quarrelſome, furious and revengeful Chriſtian is to him. For if he delight in Acts of kindneſs and mercy unto all, and is continually doing good unto his greateſt Enemies; nay, and ſince too, he has commanded us to *go and do likewiſe*, he can never certainly approve of thoſe, whoſe pride and paſſions hurry them on to thoſe Actions that are ſo directly contrary unto his Nature and Commands. He has been pleas'd to compare himſelf unto a Shepherd, Iſa. 40. 11. *Whoſe property is to gather the Lambs in his Arms, to carry them in his Boſome, and gently to lead thoſe that are with young*: and then certainly he will never approve of thoſe who without any reſpect had to old or young, ſtrong or weak, ſcatter and devour his little Flock. So on the other hand conſidering the eſſential Holineſs of the Divine nature too, we may eaſily gueſs what welcome a wicked and ungodly Wretch ſhall find from him at laſt; For certainly, he that cannot with the leaſt liking or approbation behold the leaſt ſin, will never ſuffer it to dwell with him for ever; Doubtleſs he that cannot give a Sinner, as ſuch, a good look, will never give him a gracious Reception. *Can two walk*
Amos 3. 3. *together*, ſays the Prophet *Amos, except they be agreed? Light* may as ſoon have *fellowſhip with Darkneſs*, as *Chriſt with* Belial or a merciful and holy God, with a malicious and profane man: Thoſe that by their wickedneſs have made a Covenant with Death, and are at an Agreement with Hell, can never certainly be in League with Heaven too.
Rev. 21.27. St. *John* tells us, that the New Jeruſalem will not ſuffer any unclean or abominable thing to enter into it; and if that place be of ſuch a

nature,

nature, what's He whoſe preſence gives it that purity! Certainly God Almighty will never ſuffer any to dwell with him hereafter, that have not learn'd in ſome meaſure to be like him here. Nay, we are told that the happineſs of another World conſiſts in our Reſemblance and likeneſs unto God. 1 John 3. 2. *We know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him:* therefore ſays he v. 3. *He that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf as he is pure*; *He purgeth out the old Leaven of malice and wickedneſs*, and endeavours to become *a new Lump* of Peace and Holineſs: He ſtrives to be like unto God in all manner of goodneſs here, that ſo he may be like him in glory hereafter; it being impoſſible without the one ever to obtain the other.

Secondly, The propoſition will farther appear to be true, if we conſider the nature of true happineſs it ſelf: There is nothing can make any man truly happy, but that which can ſatisfie all his preſent deſires, & ſecure him too againſt his future fears; For though he have all that heart can wiſh, yet if there be any thing he apprehends ever hereafter likely to diſturb his joys, it doth very much abate the edge of his appetite, and ſower the whole lump of his enjoyments; therefore ſays the wiſe man, Prov. 1. 33. *Who ſo hearkneth unto me ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of evil*; now there is nothing ſettles the mind in ſuch perfect Tranquillity, and ſecures it both from the ſenſe and fear of evil, as a loving and peaceable diſpoſition doth; 1 Joh. 4. 18. *perfect love caſts out fear* with all the *Torment* that attends it, and covers no leſs a multitude of Croſſes and Afflictions, than it does of Sins. For certainly, as amidſt the Delights of nature, we can never be truly happy, unleſs we think our ſelves ſo; ſo amidſt all the Croſſes that we can be exerciſed withall, a heart well fraught with love, will ſo far calm and compoſe our ſpirits, that we can never think our ſelves miſerable; This will ſo turn every thing to the beſt, that *all things ſhall work together for our good.* Whilſt on the other hand the paſſionate and revengeful man diſturbs the preſent comforts of this life, and expoſes himſelf to all the miſeries of another, ſo that he does himſelf more hurt than any body elſe; nay all things conſider'd, he is no bodies Foe but his own, ſince all the miſchief he intended another, Rebounds back again with greater force againſt himſelf; ſo true is that of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. 7 16. *His miſchief ſhall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing ſhall come down upon his own Pate.* For whilſt I ſee another perſon maliciouſly bent to work my Ruine, what is this but a fair warning for me to ſtand upon my Guard and look to my ſelf; by which means I ſhall have the Comfort, but he

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the Torment of finding no occaſion againſt me, whilſt thus too I ſhall *heap fire on his head*, and make him blow the *Coals* himſelf: For doubtleſs there cannot be a greater Torment to the mind than this, ſince wherever the man goes, and in whatſoever he does, this Ghoſt of envy and ſpleen ſo continually haunts him, that he can never be at reſt. Whilſt on the other hand the peaceable-minded Chriſtian, who intends and does no evil, neither feels nor fears any, but in the well grounded hopes of another World freely enjoys this; nay takes all afflictions, not only patiently, but joyfully too, not biting, but rather kiſſing the Rod, becauſe he knows *ther's Hony at the end of it*, and that *theſe light Afflictions work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*: So that doubtleſs, if there be any Heaven upon Earth it's this, eſpecially too when the practice of Holineſs accompanies the purſuit of Peace, and the man has learnt to be good as well as kind; Then he lives and fares well, yea more Deliciouſly every day than the Rich Glutton himſelf; it's the good Conſcience only that makes *the merry heart keep a continual Feaſt*. *The good man*, ſays Solomon, *ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf*; the loving diſpoſition of his mind, and the Innocence of his life, affording him all the ſatisfaction that his heart can wiſh. Nay, though the World frown, and Men and Devils rage and threaten, yet nothing can alter this happy ſtate; This is a joy that no man takes away, any more than the Ratling of a ſtorm upon the Tiles can put an end to the mirth that may be in the Houſe. It was upon this account that *Job* reſolved to *hold faſt his integrity, and not let it go*; *my heart*, ſays he, Job. 27. 6. *ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live*. It's true, the wicked and ungodly wretch may pleaſe himſelf for a time with his wickedneſs, and be in love with his own Folly and Extravagance; but yet all his jollity is but like that of Witches in their Tranſportations, who feed upon nothing but Air and Fancy, and return from their Diabolical Entertainments, with tyr'd Carkaſſes and hungry Bellies; *For even in the midſt of all their Laughter the heart is ſorrowful*, and ſure I am, *the end of that mirth is heavineſs*: Whilſt on the other hand, the good man is not beholden to his Imagination only for his Entertainment, but is really full and well liking; and has this advantage too beyond the other, that he is made happy with leſs trouble, and at an eaſier Rate than the other is made miſerable: The one muſt paſs through a cruel Purgatory of malice and wickedneſs before he can get to Hell, whilſt the other in his ſearch after Heaven, finds in the tranquillity of his mind a pleaſant Paradiſe all the way.

Pro. 14. 14.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The propoſition will more fully appear to be true, if we conſider the nature of theſe excellent Duties in themſelves; it's the priviledg which the true Chriſtian only enjoys above all other perſons in the World, that thoſe things that are his Duty, are both his Intereſt and his glory too, and at once contribute both to his preſent & future welfare. What therefore are all the Duties of Religion enjoyn'd him here on Earth, but ſo many accompliſhments to make him fit for Heaven? What are all the Graces of the Goſpel, but ſo many Jewels to enrich and beautifie a Crown of Glory? VVhy is he bid to *deny ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live Righteouſly, and ſoberly, and Godly in this preſent evil VVorld*, but only that thereby he may be capable of an Inheritance amongſt thoſe that are thus Sanctified? To what end are we Required to be *Renewed in the Spirit of our minds after the Image of him that Created us*, but that by our being thus like him, we may be able to ſee him as he is, and to enjoy him too? And indeed what is that happineſs which the Saints enjoy in Heaven, but only a priviledg of partaking of the Divine nature? What elſe is glory but only the higheſt perfection of Grace? And therefore, if we do but conſider the nature and imployment of juſt men made perfect in Heaven; we ſhall find them ſo exactly Transformed into the Image of God, as if their Converſe with, and Reſemblance unto him, made up the happineſs and perfection of that place. It was this, that made the Garden of *Eden* a pleaſant Paradiſe unto *Adam*; And it's this, that makes Heaven it ſelf to be Heaven to the Saints, whilſt they are here on Earth; their pureſt Gold has ſome Droſs, but there it's throughly Refin'd, and purified from all; Here the exacteſt holineſs, has ſomewhat in it that requires a pardon, but there it's ſo perfect, that it wants none; which Innocent, and therefore happy condition, muſt neceſſarily produce an everlaſting Peace, and that not only with God, and their own Conſciences, but with all the World beſides. The chief part of our Religion, conſiſts in acts of Piety unto God, and charity unto Men; nay, ſuch ſtreſs has the Scripture laid upon the latter, as without it, wholly to exclude the former. *By this*, ſays our Saviour, John 13. 35. *ſhall all men know, that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* And St. *John* tells us expreſly, 1 John 4. 20. *That if a man ſay I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar.* Now this excellent Grace, which is ſo much our Duty here, makes up the chiefeſt part of our happineſs hereafter, and doth the moſt of any thing elſe improve our natures into an abſolute perfection; And therefore that which is in St. *Luke*'s Phraſe,

ſtyled Mercy, is in St. *Mathews* ſtyled Perfection; In the one it is, *Be ye merciful, even as your Heavenly Father is merciful*; in the other it is, *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*; as may be ſeen, by comparing *Math.* 5. 8. with *Luke* 6. 36. thereby teaching us, that *we are made perfect only in Love*; And indeed, if we do but conſider what the imployment of the Saints in Heaven is, we ſhall find it to conſiſt wholly in the higheſt acts of love that can be, in which they are continually exerciſed; for there, they not only contemplate the excellencies of their Maker, and praiſe and magnifie him, but alſo ſhew ſome acts of love unto their fellow-creatures here below; for though they do not become Mediators and Interceſſors for them (as ſome fondly Dream) yet they Rejoyce to meet them in Heaven, and would gladly welcome their greateſt Enemies thither; For if there be *joy in Heaven over one Sinner that Repenteth*, that joy is doubled, when that Penitence is Crown'd with perſeverance and eternal life. So that it's not only Religion, but the end of it too; it's the way that leads to everlaſting life, and it is that life it ſelf. All which conſider'd, our Apoſtle may well preſs Peace and Holineſs upon us, above all other things in the World; For if theſe be the things that the neareſt reſemble the nature of God, and by conſequence beſt pleaſe him; if theſe are the things that not only tend to, but make up and compleat our happineſs, what can be more neceſſary for us to believe and practice; and therefore certainly we muſt needs do our ſelves an unſpeakable deal of miſchief, not to follow ſuch excellent Council and Advice, eſpecially too, ſince the enjoyments of this life, and our hopes of happineſs in another, do ſo neceſſarily depend upon it; All which, ſince I have, I hope, clearly and fully prov'd, that which remains, is to excite you to, and direct you in the practice of this Duty.

Firſt, Then ſee here the excellency of the Chriſtian Religion in general, it requires nothing at our hands, but what tends to the improving of our natures into an abſolute Perfection; all its Laws are wholeſome and good, and ſuch as a wiſe man would chooſe to be guided by, Deut. 4. 6. *Moſes* tells the Children of *Iſrael*, that the Obſervation of thoſe Laws that he taught them, would be their *Wiſdome, and their underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations*, who would be ready to give this Character of them, that they were above all others, *a wiſe and underſtanding People*; And if the Law of God were ſo excellent then, what is it now, ſince it has been improv'd by the Goſpel, and illuſtrated by our Saviours admirable Expoſition upon

on it in the Mount? Certainly there is nothing in the World more ſweet and taking, nothing that comes ſo near the Reaſon and the Intereſt of Mankind; nay, even the ſevereſt duties of it, which ſeem the moſt contrary to our natural Tempers and Conſtitutions, ſuch as are Meekneſs and Humility, Repentance and ſelf-denyal, Mortification of our Luſts and paſſions, and the like, yet even this, if we look well into them, will appear not only reaſonable in themſelves, but upon ſeveral accounts very much for our intereſt and advantage, tending all along to the perfect quiet and ſettlement of our minds here, and to our everlaſting happineſs and peace hereafter; And as for that peculiar Law of Chriſtianity, which forbids Revenge, and commands us to love our Enemies, and to forgive Injuries, though it may ſeem harſh and grievous at the firſt; yet no man can think it ſo, that compares the reſtleſs Torment, and continual ſlavery of a malicious and revengeful Spirit, with the delights and ſweetneſs of Love, and the glorious victory of overcoming evil with good, whereby a man conquers both his Enemy and himſelf.

2. See here the neceſſity of theſe two excellent Duties in particular, *viz.* peace and holineſs.

1. For that of peace, which the Apoſtle requires, ſhould be univerſal; follow peace with all men; which precept of his, doth very well agree with the New Teſtament notion, of a Brother, which is indeed every man in the World, as appears from the parable of the man that fell among Thieves, whereby not only our kindred and acquaintance, but even ſtrangers, and our very Enemies too are brought into that Relation, upon which account this becomes as neceſſary a duty, as it is an excellent grace, and commends us unto God beyond all other duties of Religion; nay, it's that which gives being to Religion it ſelf, and is the very Life and Soul of all true Devotion. For indeed what is Chriſtianity it ſelf, but the higheſt Demonſtration of the greateſt love that ever was? And why is it ſo cleerly Revealed unto us, but only to excite us to the like practices one towards another? And therefore at the laſt day, this is the main thing that we ſhall be accountable for; ſo that if there be any thing more neceſſary than other, in order to the obtaining of everlaſting Salvation, it muſt certainly be this, hatred and malice being of all other things the moſt odious in the ſight of God, as being ſo directly contrary to the daily methods of his providence; yea to his very nature and commands, tearing in pieces not only his ſeamleſs Coat, but his Body, and rendering fruſtrate the very expence of his blood, in ſo much, that he will

ſooner paſs by all our other Immortalities, than this; which therefore, that we may avoid, there be three things, which if they were Reduc'd into our practice, would very much contribute to our peace.

1. Bearing with one anothers Infirmities. 2. Dealing by others, as we would have others deal by us. 3. A ſincere and earneſt endeavour after holineſs: all which, if they were but laid to heart and practic'd, would certainly reſtore our peace as at the firſt, and our proſperity as at the beginning.

1. Bearing with one anothers Infirmities; Though it be the deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, to make us holier than others, and to improve our minds and practices beyond the common Rate of Men, yet it was never intended to make us therefore keep our diſtance, and to ſtand off from all that are not arriv'd to as high a pitch as our ſelves; no, the higher the true Chriſtian is in Gods account, the lower he is always in his own; The more experience he has had of Gods goodneſs unto him, the more pitiful and courteous he is to others. It was this that made St. Paul, *become all things to all men*, that is, ſo far to condeſcend to the weakneſs, but not the wickedneſs of any, as to deny himſelf that Chriſtian liberty, which otherwiſe he might have taken, which was doutleſs that holy guile wherewith he caught ſo many, upon which account, he recommends the ſame practice unto us, Rom. 15. 1. *we then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves*; which advice of his, is as neceſſary, as it is excellent, and would well become all Chriſtians in general, but more eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who ſhould be men of gentle and peaceable Diſpoſitions, rather compoſing differences, than fomenting of them. Therefore ſays the Apoſtle, 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekneſs, inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*; by which proceedings he ſhall obtain that which the ſame Apoſtle requires in a good Biſhop, 1 Tim. 4. 7. *A good report of them that are without*; by which means not only more Credit, and Reputation, but more Proſelytes and Converts too are to be gain'd, than by all the unnatural Methods of force and violence. For I know not what it is in mens natures, that ſo inclines them; but certainly moſt have this principle in them, that they hate to be forc'd though it be even to goodneſs and vertue, and will diſcard piety it ſelf, and Heaven too, rather than be threatned thither; whereas on the other hand the moſt refractory and ſtubborn Spirits, whom force

can

cannot prevail upon, will be ſupple and pliant, when reproofs and zeal come cloathed with love, when they ſee Tears ſhed for them, and their own intereſt more look'd after by others, than themſelves; when they ſee they are rather pitied than hated, and are notwithſtanding all their obſtinacy and wilfulneſs, woo'd both by God and Men to accept of happineſs, and an Heaven. Beſides, let us remember the beſt of men, whilſt they are here on Earth, need a great many Grains of allowance; The Education, Tempers and Conſtitutions of men are to be conſider'd, from whence the greateſt part both of their Actions and Opinions flow. Nay, I am verily perſwaded, that many times the Religion of men (at leaſt their ways of exerciſing of it) does very much follow the Tempers and Conſtitutions of their Bodies. He that is of a melancholly Diſpoſition, and inclined to thoughtfulneſs, dreads Gods juſtice, and is therefore all for mortification, and the ſeverer duties of Religion, and is doubtleſs accepted of God; Another, that is of a more lively Complexion, admires the goodneſs and love of God, and from the Influence of that keeps himſelf innocent and cheerful too, is ſociable and courteous, and by his active ſtirring, may as much promote Gods glory as the other, and I doubt not is as well accepted of him; And therefore for us to be angry with our Brethren for not acting or thinking juſt as we do, is as unreaſonable, as if we ſhould quarrel with every man that is not of the ſame Age and Complexion with our ſelves; Alas, the minds of men differ many times as much as their faces, and it often happens, that they may as well fall out about the one, as about the other; and yet we have liv'd to ſee men divided both in Opinions and Affections too, in ſo much that Chriſtianity now (the more's our ſorrow) is known by nothing more than differences and jarrs, and our profeſſion is not more adorn'd by vertues, than branded by parties, each one ſtifly defending his own opinion, though many times it be ſo trifling, that it matters not at all whether it be true or falſe; nay, though we agree in Fundamentals, yet many times a few Circumſtances make Chriſtians worſe Enemies to one another, than they would be to a Turk or a Jew; and from theſe ariſe private grudges againſt mens perſons alſo, and when our paſſions are up, we will look back Twenty or Thirty years to find Crimes to upbraid them withall; Certainly my Brethren, theſe things ought not to be ſo. Chriſtianity is a more milde and good-Natur'd thing, and was never intended to make us *Iſhmaels*, to ſet every mans hand againſt his Brother. What, becauſe we differ in our Opinions, muſt we therefore

bait and worry one another out of our lives? Doubtleſs, no Opinion that do's not thwart the Fundamentals of Religion ſhould make a ſeparation, and deſtroy our Love and Charity; and that, becauſe we have only probable Arguments for our Opinions, but we have an expreſs command for our Love; one excellent property of which, is, that it *Beareth all things, ſuffers long, and is kind*: And indeed, if we do but conſider the long ſuffering of God towards us, how much he bears with us every day, we have all the reaſon in the World to make that excellent Character and Property ours, and as much as may be, to bear with one another; to ſupport, and not devour the Weak; to ſtrengthen, and not confound the Feeble knees; to raiſe up, and not to trample upon thoſe that are down; and by this means we may do more good, than by all the Violence we can uſe, ſince a gentle perſwaſion accompanied with kindneſs, will reach farther than the ſtrongeſt Argument urg'd with Hatred and Ill Nature. Chriſtianity ſhould appear with all the Ornaments of a meek and quiet Spirit, and ſhew a Love mix'd with Sorrow, towards thoſe that are Strangers or Enemies to it; and this will make them eſteem the Love that's ſhew'd them, the Perſons that ſhew it, and praiſe the Religion that moves them to it, and ſooner then any thing elſe, perſwade them to be of it.

2 Cor. 13. 4, 7.

2. Another Expedient for Peace, is dealing by others as we would have others deal by us. When our Saviour Chriſt came into the World and dwelt amongſt us, his deſign was not only by ſuffering in our Natures to ſatisfie Gods juſtice for us, but alſo by his Life and Doctrine to teach us how to live our ſelves, how to do our Duty to God and Man too: And therefore for the help of our memories, and the information of our Underſtandings, he Epitomizes the whole Moral Law, and reduces it to this one Duty of Love to God, and to our Neighbour; and leſt any difference ſhould ariſe concerning our manner of performing this, he contracts it into this ſingle Precept, namely, *Thou ſhalt Love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*: And leſt this too ſhould be miſtaken, he explains it by that which is abſolutely the moſt natural and reaſonable principle in the World, which is, to do as we would be done by, *Matth.* 6.12. *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do you even ſo unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets*: And indeed this alone is of Univerſal Influence in the whole life of a Chriſtian, and will fully direct him, when all other things faile him. It is not every man that can tell what's Juſtice or Right in all caſes, but there's no man but can tell how he would have others deal by

by him at all times: Therefore we ought to lay aſide the byaſs of Self-love and Intereſt, and the reſt of our Paſſions, and put our ſelves in the ſame condition with other men, and then judg if we would be ſo dealt withal our ſelves as we now deal by them; certainly there's no man in the world but would find an alteration in himſelf and all his affairs.

If this golden Rule were but obſerv'd amongſt us, it would ſecure Peace to the World, and make all men as happy as it is poſſible for them to be here; we ſhould be full of mutual Goodneſs and Pitty, a World of Benefactors, a Society of Saints and Angels; and inſtead of becoming Wolves and Beaſts of Prey, we ſhould be as ſo many Gods to one another. Let us therefore be perſwaded to lay aſide our Pride and Arrogance, to attribute no more unto our ſelves then what's our due; and withall to Render to all men what belongs to them, to place our ſelves in their Circumſtances, and then act accordingly; and by this means all our Differences would be eaſily Reconcil'd, at leaſt-wiſe we ſhould be more moderate in our Cenſures, and leſs violent in our Actions. It was for the ſake of this excellent Precept that *Severus* the Emperor did much Reverence our Saviour & Chriſtianity it ſelf, and endeavour'd as much as he could to reduce it into his own practice. and for the ſake of it favour'd the Chriſtians to whom at firſt he was ſomewhat harſh and rigid; nay, and had bxilt a Temple for them, if *Ulpian* the Lawyer, and ſome others, for ſome Reaſons of State had not diverted him from it. Let not us then by the Violation of it, diſturb our own Peace and the Churches too, ſince thus we not only break the Laws of Humane Society, wound our own Conſciences, but caſt Diſhonour upon Chriſtianity it ſelf too; but let us rather, as much as in us lies, live by this Rule, and upon all occaſions, aſk our ſelves, Would we that others ſhould deal thus by us? Would we be contented to be ſlandred and abus'd, to be rail'd at and affronted, to be cheated and couzned, to be robb'd of our good Names, and the comforts of our Lives? Would we be contented to be driven up and down, from poſt to pillar, and to have all advantages taken againſt us? No certainly, we would not: Let us not then act any longer ſo directly contrary to the Reaſon of Man-kind, and to the deſign of the Goſpel too, leſt hereby we be eſteem'd the common Peſts of the world, Enemies both to God and Man too; & ſo at laſt find from the Judg of all men, the ſame meaſure that we have meeted out to others, which is to be proceeded againſt with all the violence and ſeverities of juſtice and wrath. But

3. A ſincere and earneſt Endeavour after Holineſs, would very much contribute unto our Peace. Whilſt Man continued in that happy ſtate in which he was Created, there was a perfect Peace in *Paradiſe*, and this flow'd from that perfect Innocence of his Life and Nature before his Fall; but as ſoon as ever he had eaten of the Forbidden Fruit, Sin, the great Make-bate of the World, ſet him at Variance both with God and himſelf; ſow'd Diviſion between the Man and his Wife, made mortal Enemies of Natural Brothers, and taught the whole Creation Rebellion againſt their lawful Prince, and has ever ſince taught Men all thoſe Deviliſh arts of Malice and Revenge, which they are ſo perfect in at this day. It's this curſed Root of bitterneſs in our Natures, that brings forth all that damnable fruit of Hatred and Emulation in our lives. It was the envy of *Cain* that made him firſt Hate, and then Murder his Brother. It was *David's* Luſt that coſt *Uriah* his life: The Covetouſneſs of *Ahab* that made him Murder *Naboth*: The Pride of *Haman* that made him thirſt after the blood of the *Jews*; The Ambition of *Diotrephes* that diſturb'd the Churches of *Aſia*; and if we would but lay our hands upon our hearts, we ſhould find that 'tis one Luſt or another at the bottom that arms us ſo unnaturally againſt one another; *While there is envying, & ſtrife, & diviſions amongſt you*, ſays the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Are ye not Carnal, and walk as Men?* The Man all the while getting the better of the Chriſtian; whereas were we but holy and upright, juſt and good, we ſhould be more moderate and calme: Did we in our hearts truly fear God, we ſhould by neceſſary conſequence alſo love our Brethren; were we truly ſenſible of his love and kindneſs unto us, it would make us more charitable and loving unto others. Sure I am, if we would but look neerer home, the beſt of us may find imployment enough for our utmoſt Malice and Revenge againſt our own Luſts; we need not be ſo ſevere upon other men, whilſt we have ſo many worſe Enemies in our own Boſoms, againſt which it would better become us firſt to wage war; elſe as our Saviour ſays, *Math.* 7. 4, 5. *How wilt thou ſay to thy Brother, let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye, when behold a Beam is in thine own Eye. Thou Hypocrite, firſt caſt out the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the Mote out of thy Brothers Eye.* It is upon this account therefore, that our Apoſtle adds this Duty of Holineſs to that of Peace, which is the ſecond thing to be conſider'd here as neceſſary in order to the obtaining of everlaſting Salvation.

Gen. 4.
2 *Sam.* 11.
1 *King.* 21.
Eſth. 3.
3 *John.*

2. There-

2. Therefore Secondly, and to conclude; See here the neceſſity of Holineſs, *Without which*, ſays the Apoſtle, *no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, then which there cannot be a more powerful motive in the World. Whoever conſiders the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion, how ſuitable all the Precepts of it are to the Reaſon and Intereſt of Man kind; what excellent Promiſes it makes to excite our hopes in caſe of Obedience; what amazing threats it lays down to awaken our fears in caſe of Diſobedience; whoever, I ſay, conſiders theſe things, cannot but conclude it the moſt excellent Religion in the World, and ſuch, as no man in his Wits but would readily embrace and practice: And yet if we do but look into the Lives and Converſations of thoſe that have embrac'd it, we ſhall find the generality of them as great Strangers to the practice of it, as thoſe that never heard of it. What Atheiſm and Profaneneſs, what Curſing and Swearing, what Lying and Perjury, what Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs; in ſhort, what plenty of all manner of Wickedneſs is there every where to be ſeen, even amongſt thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians? As if the Grace of God, that brings Salvation, had never appear'd; or rather, as if the appearance of it were only to teach us not to deny, but to own and practice all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts; for certainly had ſome amongſt us a Diſpenſation from Heaven, and leave to be as bad as they would, they could not well be much worſe than they are. And yet ask theſe Perſons in their more ſerious Intervals, what they think of God, and of another World, and their hopes of Happineſs ſeem to be as ſtrong as the beſt, flattering themſelves with I know not what preſumptuous thoughts of Gods mercy; as if he were oblig'd to beſtow it upon them when-ever they would vouchſafe to call for it, or to accept of it. But let theſe Men know, the Chriſtian Religion gives no encouragement to any ſuch flattering Hopes and corrupt Practices. Its true, it promiſes Eternal Life, but its only unto them that Believe. It offers Heaven and Happineſs, but its only unto them that practice Holineſs: It aſſures of Peace and Comfort in another Life, but then its only unto them that follow Peace and Righteouſneſs in this. Since without theſe, the Apoſtle aſſures us, no Man ſhall ſee God, ſhall ever behold his Face with joy and comfort, ſhall ever have the leaſt place in his Favour here, or in his Glory hereafter. It's true in one ſenſe, the moſt Wicked and Ungodly, who have neither Peace nor Holineſs, nor any other good quality beſides, ſhall ſee God; but it ſhall be only to encreaſe their Miſery, and add unto their Torment, when they ſhall ſee God, as the Devils do, with fear and horror, and

behold him as ſo far from Pittying and Relieving of them, that he will rather Laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their fear comes. Which ſole conſideration is enough, one would think, to calm the moſt Furious and Revengful, to ſweeten the moſt Sowre and Bitter Diſpoſition, to curb and reſtrain the utmoſt fury of all our Luſts; for I am much miſtaken, if it would not daunt the proudeſt Sinner that ever breathed, to look upon Death, and to ſee nothing but Hell beyond it; to behold the great God of Heaven and Earth cloath'd in all the Robes of Fury and Vengeance; to behold him unto others a Merciful Father, and Compaſſionate Redeemer; but unto himſelf a Revengeful Judge, a Conſuming Fire. Let therefore the time paſt of our Lives ſuffice that we have liv'd ſo directly contrary to our Intereſt and Duty: *Let the Wicked forſake his way, and the Unrighteous man his thoughts:* Let all ſin and wickedneſs be baniſh'd, both our hearts and lives: Let us lay aſide our former corrupt Converſations; and let thoſe Vices that do at this day rule and reign in our Nation, for the future, not be ſo much as once *named amongſt us, as becometh Saints*; ſince whoever Indulges himſelf in the leaſt ſin, ſhall never, whilſt he does ſo, *Inherit the Kingdom of Chriſt, or of God*; and may the God of all Grace ſo ſanctifie our hearts and lives in the ways of his Laws, and in the works of his Commandements, that we, being *cleanſed from all filthineſs, and pollution both of Fleſh and Spirit*, may ſo *perfect Holineſs* in the fear of God, that at laſt we may enjoy the happineſs of his ſight and preſence for ever.

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1 John 4. 20, 21.

If a Man ſay, I Love God, and Hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar; for he that Loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he Love God whom he hath not ſeen? And this Commandment have we from him, that he who Loveth God, Loves his Brother alſo.

WHoever conſiders the Nature of that New Commandment which our Saviour gave of Loving one another, ſhall find it to be a Duty ſo rational and convenient, that there cannot be any thing more becomming the Nature of a Man, and more likely to win upon, and prevail with him; and therefore the Prophet calls *the Cords of Love, the Bands of a Man.* This Law of Love being ſo naturally fitted to the tempers and conſtitutions of men (who will ſooner be allur'd and drawn, then forc'd and driven) that even the moſt rude and ſavage tempers will be calm'd and mollified by it, and made fit for Society and good Order. But now when we come to conſider it in its higheſt abſtraction, and take a proſpect of it from that Influence it has not only upon all the actions of our Lives one towards another, but even tho'e towards God too, we ſhall find the excellency of it to be far greater. For, if before it made us men, it now makes us Chriſtians, and teacheth us to love our Brethren, not for their own, but Gods ſake too; ſince it has this excellent qualification alſo, that hereby we are aſſur'd of the Truth of our Religion, and the ſincerity of our hearts towards God, our Love to our Brethren being the mark and ſign of our love to him, without which, all our Religious pretences are but vain and fooliſh, and at the beſt but Hypocritical

Hoſ. 11. 4.

and a Lye. For if a Man say I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar, &c.

In which words we have a Proposition laid down, and two Arguments to prove that Proposition.

1. A proposition which consists of a supposition: If a man say I love God, and hateth his Brother, and a conclusion deduc'd from thence, he is a Lyar, the very thing it self carrying a contradiction in its terms; for he that says he loves God *with all his heart, and with all his soul* (as every Good man ought to do) and yet in the mean time hates his Brother, or doth not love him so well as he should, however he may perswade himself to the contrary, yet all his Love is but false and counterfeit, and he himself, without mincing the matter, is no better than a *Lyar*, which the Apostle does not only say, but prove from the two following Arguments; the one drawn from the Nature of Love it self, the other from the effects and consequences of it.

1. From the Nature of Love it self; *For if he doth not Love his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* It being more Natural to us, to love those things we see and converse with, then those things we only hear of and believe, in that Nature is before Grace, and takes the first place in us; and we are more apt to love those things that are visible and affect our senses, than those things that are invisible and affect only our understandings. And therefore, if to men, with whom we converse every day, and meet with such opportunities, we do not express any Love; what reason is there to imagine we sincerely love God, when of our love to him, and the sincerity of it, we were never able to make those Tryals? because we never saw him, nor had any opportunities offer'd us of shewing any real acts of love to him. Besides, something may be judged from the difficulty of the thing; for he that will not do a thing that's easie, will hardly be suppos'd to do a thing that's more difficult: Now its harder to love one we never saw, than one that we see every day; in that sight and conversation is one Motive of Love: Now we see our Brethren daily, but we never saw God at any time; and therefore, where there is one advantage to allure our love to our Brethren, which there is not to invite and oblige us to the love of God; if a man fail in the one that is so Natural, how can it be imagin'd that he will perform the other which is less Natural? But

2. The Apostles second Argument is drawn from the effects and consequence of Love, which is Obedience to the commands and will of

of any perſon whom we Love; *And this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loves his Brother alſo:* So that its evident by the command of God, that we are as really oblig'd to love one another, as to love him himſelf; and therefore if we would ſhew any love to him, we cannot do it any better way then by Obedience to his commands. And thus the notion of loving God in Scripture, but more eſpecially in the New Teſtament, ſeems to be taken moſt fitly for one moſt eminent act of love amongſt all men, *viz.* that of doing thoſe things that are moſt acceptable and well-pleaſing to the Beloved, either as tending moſt to his good, or any other way deſirable unto him; for this indeed is the only way of expreſſing our love to another, all others being but the effects of love unto our ſelves. But becauſe God wants no Contribution of ours, either to the promoting of his good, or the advancing of his glory; and ſo our only way of doing grateful things to him, is our performing what he commands: It neceſſarily follows, that our Obedience to the mind and will of God in the higheſt and moſt perfect manner, is ſtyl'd the loving of him, this being indeed the prime, if not the only way of demonſtrating our Love to him; and therefore its the greateſt contradiction and abſurdity in the world, for a man to ſay he loves God, when he contemns and deſpiſes his Will and Commands, and is, as if a man ſhould pretend to be a Loving and Loyal Subject to his Prince, when his daily practice is to break all the Laws that ever he made: And therefore hence is it that our Saviour ſays, *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you:* A readineſs and willingneſs to perform anothers will and pleaſure being the trueſt ſign of Love and Friendſhip that can be; ſo that the Apoſtle may very well charge that man with an Untruth, who pretends to love God, and yet takes no care to Oblige and Gratifie him, eſpecially to, when he has but one only way of doing it, *viz.* by Obedience too his Commands, amongſt all which, I know none preſs'd more earneſtly upon us, then this of Loving one another. And thus I have at large, and in as plain terms as I could, given you the meaning of the words, ſo that I ſuppoſe, by this time, we may from hence conclude, That where there is no true Love to our Brother, there can be no true Religion towards God. In the proſecution of which, I ſhall endeavour 1. To prove that it is ſo. 2. Shew you ſome hinderances of our Love to our Brethren, and ſo conſequently of our Religion towards God. 3. I ſhall ſhew you how we ought to Love our Brethren. And 4. Draw an Inference or two by way of Application.

1. I ſhall endeavour to prove the Propoſition, and that 1. From the natural dependance of all Religion upon Love. 2. From the Pernitious Nature of Envy and Hatred, which is deſtructive to all Religion. And 3. From the good Providence of God, who has made the Love of our Brother to be the mark and ſigne of our Love to him.

1. From the Natural Dependance of all Religion upon Love. If we do but conſider the Nature of Religion, we ſhall find it ſo neceſſarily built upon the foundations of Love, that it's impoſſible for it to ſtand upon any other Baſis; nay, it is ſo natural to it, that all pretences whatſoever without it, will ſoon vaniſh into ayre and nothing. For as that which is not of God, can never ſtand, ſo that Religion which do's not abound in Love, can never be from God, and ſo can neither aſſure its preſent Truth, nor its long continuance, in that God is Love, and that which comes naturally from him (as all true Religion do's) muſt partake of his Nature, and abide in him, and there's no dwelling in God, without a dwelling in Love. And therefore our Saviour Chriſt anſwering that ſubtle Queſtion of the Lawyer, touching the firſt and great Commandment, makes this one duty of Love to be the fulfilling of the whole Law, *On theſe two Commandments*, viz. Love to God and to our Neighbour *hang all the Law and the Prophets*: That is, whatſoever is commanded in the Old Teſtament by *Moſes*, or any of the reſt of the Prophets, is reducible hereunto, and falls as ſo many lines into this one Centre of Love. Nay, St. *Luke* relating this Diſcourſe between our Saviour and the Lawyer, makes it not only the fulfilling of the Law, but even the only way of obtaining the Reward annex'd unto ſuch an Obedience; for the Queſtion is not here ſet down as propounded concerning the greatneſs of the command, but the obtaining of everlaſting Salvation; *Maſter, what ſhall I do to Inherit Eternal Life?* Where the anſwer is the ſame, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, which is indeed the ſum and ſubſtance of all Religion: And therefore its this which makes the Chriſtian Law ſo perfectly *a Law of Liberty*, and recommends it to us above all other Doctrines in the World; in that this do's endeavour (as all Religion ſhould) to make mans Nature perfect, and to reſtore that Image of God which was at firſt ſo unhappily defac'd; for there is nothing that a man can Anſwer and Reſemble God in, ſo much as Love; all his other Attributes of Power and Majeſty, Juſtice and Equity, Purity and Holineſs, and whatever the Divine Nature is perfect in beſides, being infinitely above us; but

Math. 20. 30.

Luke 10.

v. 25, 27.

but this now is, as it were, exactly fitted unto us; for as it's Love in him which makes *his Sun and Rain to ſhine and fall upon the Good and Bad*, ſo its that too which makes us *Love and Pray for our Enemies*, and do them all the good we can: By this God forgives us, and we forgive one another; and as this makes him give what ever we ask of him, ſo it makes us give whatever is askt of us: If we are deſir'd to go a Mile, this makes us go twain; if to give a Coat, this gives a Cloak alſo; if to forgive one Injury, this makes us to forgive even till 70 times 7 are offerd; and even then too, to be ſtill ready to forgive. Nay, there is not a Duty which the Goſpel obliges unto, but its founded upon Love: Baptiſme is a Covenant of Love; the Lords Supper is a Feaſt of Love, *Faith muſt work by Love*; and to that and all other Graces, muſt be added this Grace of Love, as that which ſeaſons all, and is therefore called the very Bond of Perfection, *Col.* 3. 14. But

2. The Truth of the Propoſition will farther appear from the Pernicious Nature of Envy and Hatred, which are deſtructive unto all Religion. As there is nothing in the World more excellent and neceſſary than this Grace of Love, ſo there is nothing more hurtful and dangerous than its contrary Paſſions of Envy and Hatred; for as the one ſtrives to make men perfectly happy, ſo the other doth all it can to make them eternally miſerable, and fights neither with ſmall nor great, but with the all of mans felicity; for by mixing and twining it ſelf into our hearts, it quite ſtifles our Religion, and doth as the Old Serpent did by our firſt Parents, Betrays us even in the midſt of Paradiſe: For whilſt we pretend to be Religious, and do not bridle this unruly Paſſion, our Religion is not only vain, but will be our Ruin too; there being no greater affront to God in the World, nor any thing more deſtructive to our ſelves, then thus Preſumptuouſly to ſin both againſt him and our own ſouls, by preſenting our ſelves before him ſo directly contrary to his Nature and Commands; for he has taken ſuch care that his worſhip ſhould be free from all ſuch impure mixtures of Hatred and Malice, that he will rather for a time diſpenſe with his Worſhip it ſelf, and have it deferr'd, then endure that it ſhould be thus unduely perform'd: *For if thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remember that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy gift before the Altar, firſt, be Reconcil'd unto thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift:* Whereby it appears that the Performance of any outward Service unto God, without Love to our Brother, is very diſpleaſing unto him, who requires *Mercy rather than Sacrifice*. *Math.* 5. 23, 24.

crifice at our hands: For if the gift, when brought to the Altar, muſt rather be left there then offer'd up, ſure there can be no Acceptance or Reconciliation with God, unleſs we be alſo Reconcil'd unto our Brother, becauſe that this muſt be done before the other can be begun. How many then have offer'd not only Fruitleſs, but Abominable Sacrifices unto him, and inſtead of pacifying, have but the rather provok'd him, nay, and have with all earneſtneſs, even beſought him to Ruin and Deſtroy them? And therefore, whilſt they ſo conſtantly repeat that bleſs'd form of Prayer which our Saviour taught his Diſciples without this Grace of Love in their hearts, they do even challenge the Power of God unto their own Damnation: For, whilſt they Proportion the Abſoluteneſs of that forgiveneſs which they beg of God, unto that which they give to others, and yet all that while are ready to do all the Miſchief they can unto them; what is this but to beg of God to do his worſt againſt them, and to exerciſe the utmoſt of his Power in their Everlaſting Deſtruction; and ſure men, in ſuch a condition are very far from all Religion. For beſides the Deſtructive Nature of Envy and Hatred unto all humane Societies, which can no longer ſtand where theſe Reign, than an Houſe divided againſt it ſelf can, (as may be ſeen in many fatal inſtances both at home and abroad) it is ſo contrary unto all Religion too, that where-ever, its entertain'd like a little Leaven, it ſoures the whole lump, and renders all our performances fruitleſs and vain. And then, I hope, there's no man will think St *John* either Uncivil or Uncharitable in thus plainly giving the Lye to all pretenders to Religion towards God, without Love to their Brethren too; for, he that ſays he Loves God, and Hates his Brother, is a Lyar. But

3. The Propoſition will yet farther appear to be True, from the Providence of God who has made the Love of our Brother to be the mark and ſign of our Love to him. If we do but conſider the Nature of that Relation which we ſtand in one towards another, we ſhall eaſily perceive that this piece of Gods providence, in making the Love of our Brother to be the mark and ſign of our Love to him, is grounded and bottom'd upon as great Reaſon as any is in the World; for we are all Members of that Myſtical Body, whereof Chriſt is the Head: Now where there is no true Love to the Fellow-members, there can be no true Love to the Head, becauſe in the ſame Body, the Head and Members ſhare alike: If therefore the Members fall out, and be at Enmity one with another, they can never agree and be at peace with the Head. Beſides, there can be no other way of ſhewing our Love to God than this;

this; for as our Capacities are now, all others are either above us, or below us; we cannot be ſaid to Love God properly, and as he is, becauſe he is a Spirit and Inviſible, and ſo do's infinitely tranſcend our higheſt conceptions of him; and therefore that which we call Love to him, is not properly ſuch, but rather Adoration and Devotion: And then ſeeing the Divine Nature is ſo far beyond the expreſſions of our Love, we muſt look out ſome other way, by which we may more clearly evidence it, and that muſt be by ſomewhat of our own Nature and Condition. Angels are therefore above us, and all others Creatures are below us, and not capable either of receiving or returning of our Love, ſo that there is nothing elſe that can be the object of it, but our Brethren or our ſelves: Now ſelf love is too narrow and ſcanty to have any thing of this Divine Quality in it, which is of a more extenſive and univerſal Nature. Beſides, its ſo far from teſtifying of our Love to God, that it may as well be in a Devil as a Man, as may be ſeen in the Caſe of *Dives*, whoſe requeſt to *Abraham*, of ſending *Lazarus* to warn his Brethren, did not proceed from any love to, or care of their ſouls, but only out of reſpect unto his own, leſt by their coming into that Place, now his torments ſhould be increas'd; ſo that its only the Love of our Brethren that can teſtifie the reality of our Love to God, becauſe that can only prove that we do not Love in Word and in Name only, but in Deed and in Truth. In that, in the immediate expreſſions of our Love to God, there may be nothing more then a Complemental Hypocriſie; and for that which we ſhew unto our ſelves, there is too much of Intereſt in it to bear witneſs for us, for ſelf-denyal is the great Principle of Love: Beſides, can there be a better way of ſhewing our Love to God, than this which he himſelf hath taught us? And *herein was the Love of God manifeſt to us in that he laid down his life for us*, thereby doing that for us which we ſtood in the greateſt need of; and herein alſo ſhould we manifeſt our Love to him in doing what we can, even to the hazarding and laying down of our lives for him, which we can never better do, then in *Laying of them down for the Brethren*, this being the only way he expects a return from us: And therefore the Apoſtle well Argues from the Reaſonableneſs of the thing, *Beloved, if God ſo Loved us*, he doth not ſay we ought

Luk. 16.

John 3. 16.

alſo to Love him; but *we ought alſo to Love one another*; our Love to one another being the beſt Argument of our Love to him, becauſe *he which loveth him that begat, loveth them alſo that*
Cap. 5. v. 1. *are begotten of him*; there being a kind of Contradiction in the thing, for a man to ſay he truly loves another perſon, when he hates whatſoever belongs to him, or is like him: And I am ſure there is nothing Reſembles God ſo much, as that which he ſet his own Image upon at firſt, *viz.* Mankind, in reſpect of which *we being all his Off-ſpring*, ought to *Love as Brethren*. But

2. I come now to conſider the hinderances of our love to our Brethren, and ſo conſequently of our Religion towards God, and they are amongſt too too many, others theſe three: 1. Taking up, and divulging evil Reports of them, whether they be True or Falſe. 2. Harſh and unkind cenſuring of them and their Actions. And 3. Confining of our love only to ſome particular perſons.

1. Taking up, and divulging evil Reports of them, whether
1 Cor. 13. 7. they be True or Falſe; when the Apoſtle tells us, that *Charity believeth all things*; his meaning is not, that it's ready to take up every flying Report, and Story that paſſeth up and down the World for Currant, but that it's ſo kind and good natur'd, as to aſſent and give credit only to thoſe things that are good and commendable; and if it hears any thing that is otherwiſe, not to believe it without great care and Caution, nor even then to ſpread it farther, but as much as may be (unleſs it be too notorious indeed) to conceal it, becauſe *Charity beareth all things*, before it believeth them; and when it cannot chooſe but believe them, yet even then it *hopes* better, and therefore it *endureth all things too*. You know what miſchief the evil Report that was brought upon *Canaan* did, how it ſhut both them that rais'd, and
Numb. 14. them that entertain'd it too out of the Land: and inſtead thereof,
29, 30, 31. led them a tedious march through a troubleſome Wilderneſs; nor ſhall they fare better, who are thus guilty in this matter amongſt us; A Tale-bearer, and a buſie-body, being no ſmall troubler of this our *Iſrael* too, and therefore ſuch as theſe the Apoſtle juſtly condemns, as having caſt off their *firſt love*, by
2 Tim. 5. making contrary to their Duty and Faith given to the Church,
12, 13. ſuch Rents and Diviſions in it, as they by ſuch unchriſtian carriage

riage did; where you may farther obſerve, that the Apoſtle doth not call them *Slanderers*, but *Tatlers and buſie bodies*, ſuch as do not invent, but divulge Stories; which things indeed differ but very little, and no more then the Receiver doth from the Thief: For, let the Report be either true or falſe, the ſpreading of it may very juſtly be condemned; for if it be Falſe, then thou haſt made a wound in thy Neighbours Credit; and if it be True, then thou haſt made the wound wider; both which are very prejudicial to Chriſtianity. And indeed this unchriſtian Temper, is a very great cauſe of that general uncharitableneſs that is amongſt us; for if we hear any thing againſt a Friend, a cleer Demonſtration will hardly convince us, nay, and even then we'll do all we can to ſmother it; whereas if we can but get a ſtory by the end againſt one we care not for, how ready are we to declare and divulge it, nay, and even rejoyce and make ſport at the relating of it too; and if this partiality be not vile and Abominable, and contrary to the Rules of Charity, I know not what is. Is this to help an Enemies Oxe or Aſs out of a Pit, when we endeavour all we can to plunge him into a Deeper? Is this to do like that good *Samaritan*, whom our Saviour has propounded for our Pattern and example, when inſtead of Relieving, we wound our Neighbour; and inſtead of Wine and Oyl, we pour Vinegar and Gall into the wounds of his Reputation? No ſure, this is ſo groſs a piece of ill nature, that it looks rather like a maxime of Hell, than a precept of Chriſtianity, ſince none but the Devils rejoyce at the falls and miſcarriages of Men; And therefore for men to deal thus unnaturally with one another, is to liſt themſelves amongſt that Infernal Crew before their time, and to turn Devils before they can get to Hell; you know whoſe work it is to be the Accuſer of the Brethren; but to Accuſe them falſly, and to add Perjury to Lying, is of all other things highly uncharitable.

2. Another hindrance of our Chriſtian Peace is, harſh and unkind cenſuring of men and their Actions. And indeed this is ſuch an ill nature Temper, that were there no ſuch thing in the World as Chriſtianity to be diſturb'd by it, yet common Reaſon, and an ordinary Ingenuity might (one would think) make any Rational man loath and deteſt it; and yet there is nothing more

frequently acted amongst us, to the shame of our natures, and scandal of our Religion; for this will oftentimes put the worst Constructions upon the best Actions, and condemn a man the severest for those things, for which he deserves the highest commendation and Reward; This makes a man that's Devout and Zealous towards his God, to be looked upon as an Hypocrite before men, and altogether to want the power of Godliness, because he makes use of a Devouter form of it; And can there be a greater hindrance of our love than this, when we shall thus rashly deprive one another of our nearest and dearest concern? This is to have an evil eye of our own, because our Brother has a good one; and not only to rob God of his Honour, but of those that Honour him too, whilst thereby we many times make Devils even of his best Saints. This is to lay the greatest matter oftentimes to the charge of Gods Elect, whom he has justified, and to condemn those for whom Christ has dyed, yea rather for whom upon that very account he is risen again; and sure he that's guilty of this, can pretend to but very little of Brotherly love, Censoriousness, and that being as contrary as Light and Darkness; And therefore Charity accounts every man honest till he be disprov'd, and will not so much as think evil against any, whereas censure and worldly policy deals with every man, as if he were a Knave, nay, and will endeavour to make a man bad, before he be so; and will sooner take notice of one bad Action, than an Hundred good ones. He that loves another will wink at his faults, and endeavour to hide them from others too, whereas envy and hatred will pass censure upon Vertues, and Arraign even a mans best Actions; And here I would not be understood, as if I did condemn all Admonitions and Reproofs, all observation of other mens Actions, (for then I should be at present silent my self) no I mean only such as pass unkind Interpretations upon them, when there is as fair a way made for a good Construction, as for a bad one; when men tell a mans faults not privately to himself, but to others too, if not to every body that knows or has but heard of him; and that not with a design to admonish and reclaim him, but to expose and upbraid him: It's such only that I here speak of, for it's the greatest piece of love and kindness that can be, kindly to admonish and advise; and there-

therefore to have a Friend that's always flattering, and is either afraid or unwilling to Reprove or chide, when there is cauſe, is to meet with ſuch a Friend as wounds deeper than an Enemy, and is ſuch a piece of Friendſhip, as I pray God ſend I may never meet with: It's therefore unkind Cenſuring, and not Counſelling and adviſing that I here ſpeak of, as the great hindrance of our Chriſtian love; and indeed, if we did but conſider the faults we have of our own, and did but as clearly ſee the Beam in our eye, as we do the mote in our Brothers, and withall how unable we are to judg of our ſelves, and how often we have been deceiv'd and cheated in both, we ſhould quickly have enough of this unnatural Temper; how our own goodneſs has had a mixture of the Leaven of Hypocriſie, our Charity a Tincture of vain glory, and a deſire to be ſeen of Men, our Repentance only a melancholly fit, and loſt in the next merry and jovial Company, and our other Graces ſtamp'd with Lukewarmneſs and Formality; and withall, how we may be as bad deceiv'd in others, how we have thought, that to be a ſullen Moroſeneſs, which has only been a Retir'dneſs for Meditation, that to be Pride and Haughtineſs, which has been a brave Generoſity and Nobleneſs of Spirit, that to be folly, which has been the greateſt Wiſdome; All which, and many others may convince us of our weakneſs and want of skill in judging, unleſs like God we could ſearch the Heart, and prie unto the ſecret Receſſes of the Soul, and may alſo inform us of the miſchief we hereby do unto our Profeſſion, and Chriſtian Love, by our Ignorant indiſcretion, and ill-nature. But

3. Another hindrance of our Chriſtian Love is, confining of our Love, only to ſome particular Perſons. Love is of a Diffuſive and ſpreading nature, and extends it ſelf like the influence of Heaven both far and wide; and therefore when it teacheth us to be kind unto our Brethren, it alſo makes every man our Brother; nay, and brings our very Enemies too into that Relation, ſince it commands us *to do good to them that hate us, and Perſecute us*; and therefore the Brother, that the New Teſtament ſays we muſt Love, is every man in the World, as appears from that Parable of the man that fell among Thieves: Indeed we may, and might ſometimes, to put a difference be- *Luke 10.*

tween

tween one Brother and another in the measures and degrees of our Love, according to the different degrees of their deserts, and the nearness of their Relation unto us; but yet we must look upon all as Brethren, and must not, to give one a *Benjamins* Portion, Rob all the rest of their's. Thus *David* loved *Jonathan* as his own Soul; and our Saviour shew'd more affection unto *John*, then to any of the rest of his Disciples; and there's no Reasonable Man will deny, but that we may shew more Kindness to our Kindred and Country-men, than to meer Strangers; more to just and good men, then to the Profane and Wicked; for though we must *do Good to all*, yet there's an *Especially* added *to those that are of the Houshold of Faith:* But now here is that Partiality that we must take heed of, when we confine and limit our Love to these only, and shew it to none but those that are of the same Society with us in the Church, who think as we do, and are of the same Profession with our selves; when we will not be Civil and Courteous to those that differ from us in Opinion, nor Relieve those Poor (let their Necessitys be never so great) that are not of the same Faith as we are: This indeed has been the very Bane of the Churches Unity and Peace, and has been the Cause of those many Divisions under which we groan at this very day; insomuch that there cannot be a greater stumbling block to the Conversion of the Gentiles than this, when it will be a harder task to perswade them what kind of Christians to be, then to be Christians at all; nay, for my own part, had I not something greater than the Examples of Christians (yea, even of those who pretend to be the best amongst us) I would this very moment Renounce my Christianity; for I am sure that this kind of Love can never come from God, for he *makes his Sun to shine upon the Evil and upon the Good, and causeth his Rain to fall upon the Just and Unjust:* So far is he (who has greater Reason to distinguish then thou hast) from making any difference, and then I wonder who made thee a Judg? If the Master will have the Wheat and the Tares both grow together, and receive the same common influence of Sun and Rain, I wonder who set thee to work before the Harvest begin! Sure I am, had Christ himself taken this course, I know

Gal. 6. 10.

Math. 5. 45.

not

not how we had come by our Chriſtianity: Had he come only, as well as firſt and chiefly to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, I know not how we Gentiles had come in; no, its true, he came firſt unto his own People the Jews, but yet he never Rejected any Gentiles that believed on him; and therefore the Commiſſion which he gave unto his Apoſtles was to *Teach all Nations*; and to that end, after his Aſſention, to confirm their Commiſſion, he beſtowed upon them the *Gift of Tongues*, by which he *poured out his Spirit upon all Fleſh*: So that now a Turk, or a Heathen, as he is a Man, has a Right to Juſtice and Charitable Offices, as well as a Chriſtian; nay, and more Right too, than thoſe that deny them, ſince every denyal makes a forfeiture, becauſe that what every man has, was beſtowed on him with this Condition, that as he did *freely Receive*, *ſo he ſhould freely Give*. And again, our Saviour tells us, that this Univerſal Love, is the only ſign that we belong to him; *By this ſhall all Men know, that you are my Diſciples*; not if you love this or that Perſon or Society, but *if* in General *you Love one another*; *for if you Love them that Love you, what Reward have you? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?* But *Math.* 28. 19. *Joh.* 13. 35. *Math.* 5. 46.

3. I come in the next place to ſhew how we ought to Love our Brethren? And here the Love that we muſt bear them, muſt not be of an ordinary or common Nature; for our Saviour tells us, we ought to Love our Neighbour, and ſure then, much more a Brother as our ſelves; *Thou ſhalt Love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, and then we may ſoon ſee how we ought to Love our Brother, ſince every man knows how he Loves himſelf: But yet our Saviour do's not mean there a Love of the ſame Equality, with that which we have for our ſelves, which would ſometime or other reduce a man to a Natural Abſurdity, as in caſe of Famine, and the greateſt danger, where without doubt, I am to prefer my ſelf firſt: No, he means only ſuch a Love which has the neareſt reſemblance, and likeneſs to that which we have for our ſelves; which is in ſhort, *To Love others, as we would have others to Love us*: And indeed this Golden Rule of Juſtice, in doing as we would be done by, has a natural influence upon the whole life of a Chriſtian, and will fully direct him in the whole courſe of his Duty, *Math.* 22. 39.

Duty towards his Neighbour; for there are many things in which I cannot ſo fully tell how I ought to do by others; yet I can reſolve them all, by conſidering how I would have others deal by me: And therefore, here, as you would not have others to raiſe and ſpread evil Reports concerning you, ſo do not you do ſo by them; as you would not have others to cenſure your Actions, ſo do not you cenſure theirs: And as you would be fed and cloath'd, when you are Hungry and Naked, ſo do you do the like by them that are in ſuch a Condition: And as in Diſtreſs you would receive Help and Aſſiſtance, even from an Heathen, or a wicked man, or from one that differs never ſo much from you in Opinion, ſo let not that divert your Love and Aſſiſtance when they are in Diſtreſs. And ſince (the greater is our miſery) moſt of our unhappy differences ariſe from that which ſhould be the greateſt Bond of Peace amongſt us, *viz.* Religion, Let us but for a time ſuſpend our ſtrife and jarrs about diſputable matters, and lay hold of this certain Truth, To do as we would be done by, and we ſhould be eaſily reconcil'd. We muſt not carry our ſelves innocently towards others, and endeavour to impoſe our Opinions on them whether they will or not, nor declare any Hatred and Contempt of theirs; not but that we may confute a falſe Religion, and ſtrive by all lawful means to convince a Turk or a Jew, or an Erroneous Chriſtian; but then we muſt not Reproach another mans Religion, and caſt Dirt both upon him and his Profeſſion, and upbraid when we ſhould reprove, and the Reaſon is, becauſe we would not willingly be thus dealt withal our ſelves; we would not have any man Contemn and Deſpiſe us, and our Religion, and therefore if we would have others to conſider us, we muſt not neglect them. And if this ſhort Rule were but obſerv'd, we ſhould be better Men and better Chriſtians, our Preſent lives would be more comfortable, and our Eternal ones more happy; for I can never be brought to underſtand how biting and devouring one another in this life can conduce any thing to our Eternal Peace and Quiet in another life. But

4. The Inferences from all, are theſe two:

1. See here the Excellency of this Grace of Love; It's that which gives the reliſh unto all our other Dutys of Religion, by which we are known to be Chriſtians, and to Love God, by which

which we approve our ſelves to be Obedient unto him, and without which, it is impoſſible to pleaſe him; for though we have the gift of Tongues, and could ſpeak with the Eloquence of an Angel; though we had all knowledg, and underſtood all that was poſſible for a man to know; nay, though we had all Faith, and could do more than is poſſible for a Natural Man to do, yet all would profit us nothing without this Grace of Love; for we ſhould be as empty and vain as ſounding braſs, and make no better Harmony than a tinkling Cymbal. It's this too which reaches not only quite through, but even beyond all the enjoyments of this life, and is greater than either Faith or Hope; ſince this is part of that Happineſs which the one looks for, and of that Aſſurance which the other deſires, which can only be eſteem'd by the experimental knowledg of it; for like thoſe things that are truly excellent in themſelves, the more its known, the better its lik'd, and which nothing but the everlaſting experience of it can deſcribe.

2. See here the ſad condition of thoſe that want it; as it is the Excellency as well as Duty of a Chriſtian to abound in Love, ſo its the greateſt unhappineſs for any man to want it, ſince not only all his pretences to happineſs in this world are vain and nothing, but all his hopes in another (if ever he had any) ſhall periſh; for if the great evidence of our Love to God, be our Love to our Brother, by which we ſhall be tryed at the laſt day, how miſerable then ſhall they be, whoſe chief and only Plea ſhall be found a Lye? When the refuſing to cheriſh and comfort the leaſt of Chriſts Servants, ſhall be look'd upon as deny'd unto himſelf; with what face can theſe men ask an Heaven of him, who would not give ſo much as a cup of cold water unto his? How can they lay claim to his Everlaſting Love, that us'd all the Cruelty and Spite imaginable againſt his Members? Can they who would not forgive a Penny, look to be forgiven a Talent? No certainly, they ſhall have but one Petition of all their Prayers Anſwer'd, which ſhall be to be forgiven, as they themſelves have forgiven others: And they that did delight to live here in the flames of Contention, ſhall then try how they can dwell with everlaſting burnings, and their puniſhment ſhall be what themſelves have choſen: For as they have all along, by their want of Love, liv'd

as without God in the World, so their Condemnation shall be to live without him for ever. And now tell me poor Soul, whom thou hast injur'd all the while thou did'st prosecute thy Hatred and Revenge? Thou hast hated thy Brother, and hast thereby sinned against thine own soul: Thou hast unjustly Condemn'd him, and hast sign'd a Bill against thine own Life; thou hast laid a Trap for him, and art taken in a worse thy self: Thou wert unmerciful unto him, and now thou art deliver'd over unto the Tormentors: Consider but this, and then tell me what thou hast got by all thy Hatred and Revenge which was once so sweet! And if this be the end of all, notwithstanding all thy vast pretences, *Sit anima mea inter Philosophos*, O my Soul, come not thou into their Secrets, for I had rather, at the last day, be found in the place of a peaceable, sober, and loving Heathen, then of a persecuting, quarrelsome, and envious Christian: Let me therefore exhort you all to live like Men and Christians; consider you have all the Obligations that can be to Love one another; you owe all to God, and this is all the Payment he expects from you, nay, which he will again Reward you for all at last: The comforts of this present life call for it, and the Everlasting happiness of the next command it. Live therefore in peace with one another, that so you may dye in Peace with God, and have a care of any thing that may break the Peace either with your Brother or your God, for its no easie matter to make it up again; for the Wise man tells us, that *A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their Contentions are like the Bars of a Castle*: And I am sure it's no easie matter to appease Gods Anger when it's once Provok'd, whilst on the contrary, where this happy Union is once made, there is nothing in the World that can divide it. Let therefore nothing separate you from the Love of one another, that so nothing may be able to separate you from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, to whom with the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, and only Wise God, be all Honour, Glory, and Praise, both now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

Prov. 18, 19.

FINIS.